

5-3-93

Dear Persons:

I am concerned about what's on
TV for children's viewing and adult
viewing as well. The violence and
sexuality on prime-time TV is
appalling, including advertising as well
as programming. I believe TV can be
used for creative entertainment and
information and can help instill
stable values in the public. What
about children's laughter? I

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Children's TV M¹ Rocket
#93-48 / Sec. 704
Federal Communications Commission
Room 222
1919 M St. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20554

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MAY 6 1993

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93-48
Sunday
May 2, 1993

MAY 6 1993

Dear Concerned,

I read the ~~Journal of the Secretary~~ ^{FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION} ~~Journal of the Secretary~~ article by Christopher Scanlon. While I await my flight to Ca. I want to write to add my voice, as a grandmother, very concerned with the violence on T.V. during the hours children tune in.

My suggestions are to focus on historical drama i.e. Indiana Jones, the young I. T. and update the Nancy Drew dramas. Emphasis would be on the person + plot and away from action-violent acts in particular.

+ to pick up on a daily column in the Phila Inquirer "for kids" which raises questions + gives excellent responses. May all the responses are worthy of dramatization.

+ Create situations with worth-while + positive values portrayed.
move values + less violence.

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MAY 6 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

93-48
Dear Sir,

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4/3/93

MAY 6 1993

I'm writing to you about Children's Television. "Barney" is particular. I have heard criticism + the fact that some people think it's stupid or absurd. For one thing, there are practically NO shows for toddlers.

~~There~~ are special little minds that are at the very beginning stages of learning.

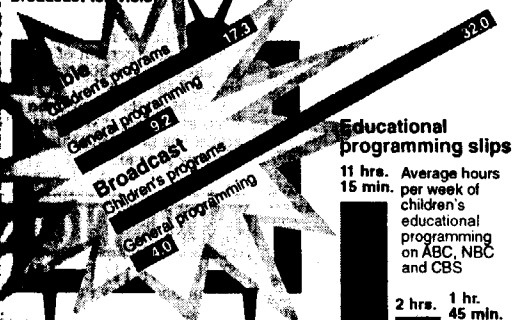
While Sesame Street teaches counting + letters + other wonderful things, the "Barney" show teaches sharing + caring, + the fact that you can have a friend, but the friend can be someone else's friend also. Kids that they're special.

CHILDREN'S TV: LESS INFO, MORE VIOLENCE

The amount of educational children's television dropped dramatically in the 1980s, and violence continues to be highest on children's TV.

Kids' shows most violent

Number of violent acts per hour for cable and broadcast television



The Rushnell Co. Violence in Cable and Broadcast Programs by George Rushnell
1980 1985 1990
Knight-Ridder Tribune

WATCHING TV — AND YOUR KIDS

Experts on children and television suggest ways parents can try to counter the negative effects on children of watching television:

- **Help your child make a time chart of daily activities:** homework, play, TV-watching, etc. Discuss what to eliminate and what to replace it with.
- **Set a weekly viewing limit.** Let your child choose programs at the beginning of the week. Assign points to programs and give the child a total to spend weekly. Programs you don't want your child to watch can "cost" more points.
- **Watch television with your children** and talk about what you see so they learn there are other ways of looking at what's on.
- **Watch at least one episode of your child's favorite shows** to learn how violent they are. Talk about why the violence happened and the pain it causes. Ask your child how conflicts can be solved without violence.
- **Explain to your child** how TV violence is "faked" using stunt men and other techniques.
- **Don't use television as a reward or punishment.**
- **Encourage your child** to watch shows with characters who cooperate and are caring.
- **Explain to the child** the value your family holds about sex, drugs, alcohol and the treatment of the less-fortunate.
- **Set a good example.** Too many parents complain about their children's viewing habits, but watch whatever is on.
- **Adopt a TV station.** In Maryland, parents and community groups have teamed up to monitor children's programming at local stations and meet with station officials to discuss their concerns. For more information, write the Center for Media Education, P.O. Box 33039, Washington, D.C. 20033-0039 or call (301) 270-3379.

Sources: Prof. George Gerbner, University of Pennsylvania; American Psychological Association; Center for Media Education.



20th Century Fox Film Corp.

KIDS' STUFF? The Simpsons' is part of an explosion of programs aimed at children. Some complain more isn't better.

Kids' TV more of a wasteland than ever, critics say

FCC cracking down on stations that lack quality programming

CHRISTOPHER SCANLAN
World Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Kids may think they've never had it so good.

From the 24-hour Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon to the six Children's Network, children have more television targeted at them than ever. *X-Men*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Saved by the Bell*, *Full House*, *The Simpsons*. The list goes on and on.

But in this case, critics of children's television say, more is less.

In 1990, the three major networks were showing 11 hours of educational shows like the now defunct *Schoolhouse Rock*, according to Squire Rushnell, a senior vice president for children's television at ABC. By 1990, such programming had dwindled to less than two hours a week. "It's less than an hour a day," Rushnell says.

Children's television "today means the video equivalent of a winkie. Kids enjoy it despite its absolute absence of any educational content," says Rushnell.

casters to air "educational and informational programming" for children, Congress and the Federal Communications Commission largely left it to broadcasters to decide what that meant.

"For three years the act was ignored," Carol Rasco, a top domestic policy adviser to President Clinton, told the National Summit on Children and Families in early April. "The same kinds of folks who informed us that ketchup is a vegetable were happy to certify *G.I. Joe* as an educational television program."

People have complained about television's effect on children almost since the first black-and-white sets began appearing in the late 1940s. But the subject is especially volatile today. TV viewing is now considered a key cultural indicator, a likely culprit for everything from obesity to low test scores, to record-high murder and suicide rates among American children.

There's a growing movement by health experts to label television violence a public health threat that needs as much attention

PROGRAMMING SUGGESTIONS

Concerned about what's on television for kids? How many hours of educational and informational programming — and what kinds of shows — should stations broadcast? You can send your ideas to the Federal Communications Commission, which is trying to answer those questions as it considers tougher rules for children's television. The deadline is May 7.

but the FCC will accept contributions until June 7.

Write to:
Children's TV MM Docket No. 93-48
Secretary,
Federal Communications Commission
Room 222
1919 M St. NW
Washington, DC 20554

television is more violent than ever and offers fewer opportunities for education. Parents and researchers complain that children are routinely presented with stereotypes about women, minorities, the poor and elderly and skewed values about sex, drugs and alcohol.

This is not something our parents were up against. . . . [There are] murder and nude scenes all the time," says Karen Zink-Brown, a Catonsville, Md., mother of three who is part of a statewide movement, Campaign for Kids TV, that plans to "adopt" local stations to monitor children's programming.

Kids see the most violence

School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

Gerbner has been tracking television violence since 1967, counting every time someone hurts or kills or threatens to do so, on television shows. The latest count, as of November 1991: 32 violent acts per hour during children's programming on network television, compared to four violent acts in prime time.

Equally disturbing, some studies suggest television's portrayals of sex and drugs give children the wrong messages.

"For every message on television that says, 'Just say no,' there are six that say: 'Can't sleep, take a drug. Want to lose weight, take a drug. Feeling a little down, take

'Television is a thief of time; it robs children of critical hours required for learning about the world, about one's place in it.'

JOHN CONDRY,
a Cornell University child psychologist

But Condry argues that television's worst fault is simply the time children spend with it. Of the approximately 112 hours most people are awake each week, he estimates, American children spend about one third — 40 hours — watching television or playing video games on it.

"Regardless of what they watch, children who are heavy viewers tend to read less, play less, be more obese," says Condry in a scathing indictment of television published in the current issue of *Daedalus*, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

"Television is a thief of time; it robs children of critical hours required for learning about the world, about one's place in it," he says. "That is bad enough, but television is worse than a thief; it is a liar. For the little truth television communicates, there is much that is false and distorted."

characters on the popular sitcom *Married With Children*.

Says Robert Mauro, of Severna Park, Md.: Dad Al is a "weird shoe salesman." His wife Peg "is mean and takes all his money." Daughter Kelly is "really stupid." Son Bud: "I like Bud. I just think he wants girls."

Under pressure from the White House and Congress, the FCC is cracking down on stations that fail to live up to the Children's Television Act. License renewals have been held up for stations that claimed reruns of two cartoon shows, *The Jetsons* and *The Flintstones*, were educational. It is also considering stricter guidelines.

Broadcasters cry censorship but have begun to respond.

Walt Disney Studios says it will launch a weekly half-hour children's education show. CBS added *Breakman's World*, a '90s

Al Ostrow
30 E. Franklin Ave

92-48